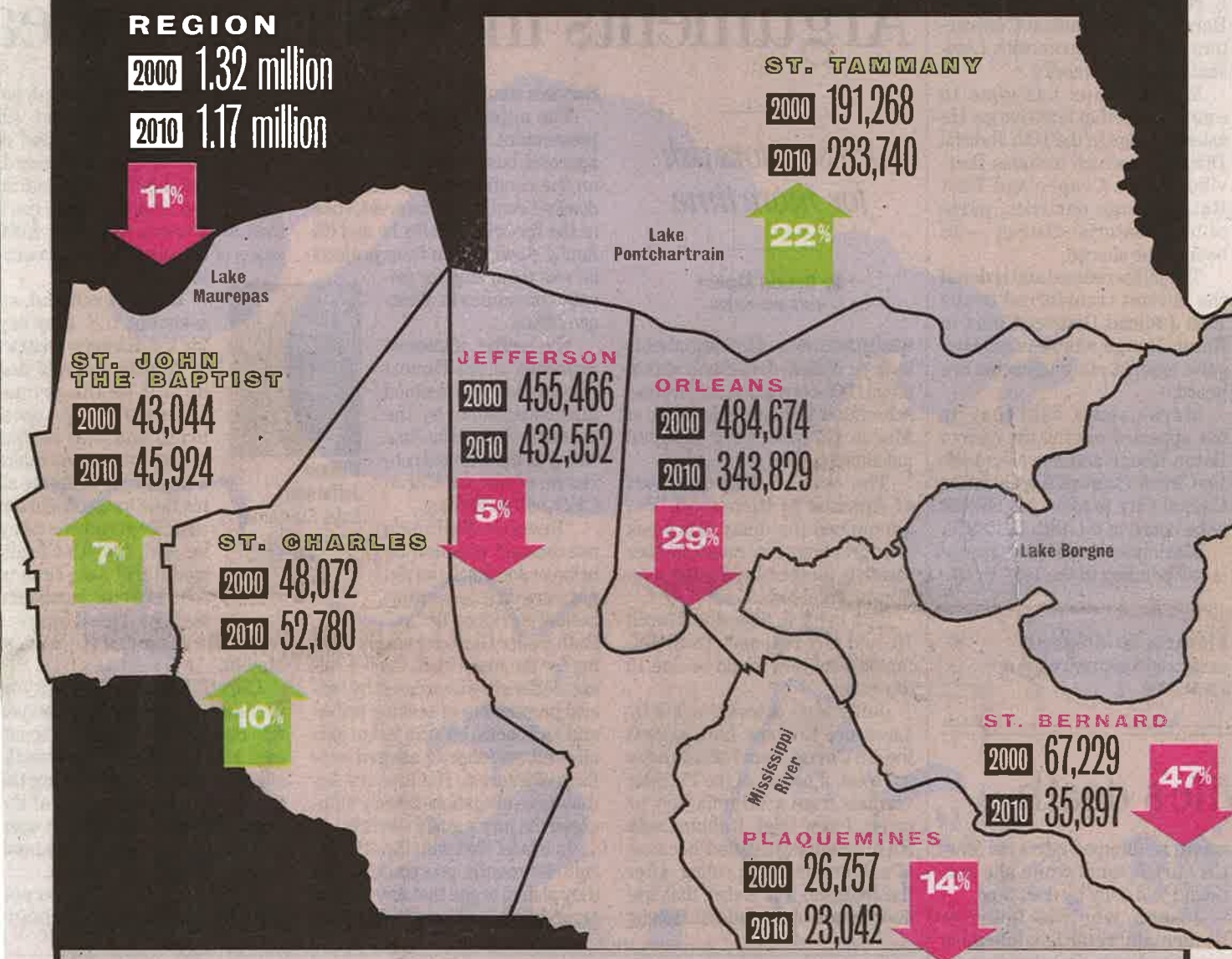


CENSUS DATA CHART AREA'S UPS, DOWNS

New Orleans, St. Bernard populations sink



By Michelle Krupa

Staff writer

TP FEB - 4 2011

Five years after Hurricane Katrina emptied New Orleans and prompted the largest mass migration in modern American history, the 2010 census counted 343,829 people living in the still-recovering city, a 29 percent drop since the last head count a decade ago, according to data released Thursday.

The latest decennial tally found about 11,000 fewer residents than the latest annual population estimate that the Census Bureau issued, in 2009. Though the difference

amounts to only 3 percent, it's likely to prompt questions about whether the city's recovery has been less robust than portrayed.

A month before Katrina, about 455,000 people called New Orleans home, according to census estimates. That figure plummeted to about 210,000 residents the following year and had rebounded to just fewer than 355,000 people by mid-2009, according to the estimates, which rely on modeling rather than head counts.

As a region, the New Orleans area largely held its ground during the first decade of the 21st century, despite the Katrina diaspora, the

new data show. About 1.17 million residents were counted in 2010 in the seven-parish metropolitan area, compared with 1.32 million people in 2000, a drop of 11 percent.

As in 2000, Jefferson Parish ranked as Louisiana's second-most populous parish in 2010 with 432,552 residents, though it too lost ground compared with its 2000 total of 455,000 people, the data show. Taking over from Orleans as the most populous parish was East Baton Rouge, with 440,171 people.

St. Tammany Parish, which drew hordes of coastal residents after the

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An in-depth look at the census numbers with racial breakdowns A-5

Jeff ranks 2nd in state; Tammany surges

CENSUS, from A-1

storm, saw its population surge in 2010 to 233,740 residents, 22 percent more than the 191,000 people who lived on the north shore in 2000.

Hard-hit St. Bernard experienced the most dramatic population decline in the state, losing 47 percent of its population compared with 2000. Plaquemines Parish's population also fell, though only by 14 percent.

Meanwhile, the River Parishes showed steady growth. St. Charles experienced a nearly 10 percent population jump, and St. John the Baptist Parish grew by almost 7 percent.

Along with Orleans and St. Bernard parishes, hurricane-ravaged Cameron Parish saw the steepest population loss in the state, with its population shrinking by 32 percent. Ascension and Livingston parishes near Baton Rouge had the largest percentage of growth, each topping 39 percent.

The new data finally lay to rest perhaps the most fundamental question hanging over the region since the recovery began: How many people live here?

The new numbers will be key to determining how large a slice of \$400 billion in federal money local parishes will receive in coming years for programs ranging from subsidized school lunches to Medicaid, as well as how political power will shift in the state Legislature and locally elected bodies.

Charting racial changes

Thursday's release also included data about race and ethnicity, which showed that New Orleans' racial composition shifted somewhat as a result of the outmigration after Katrina.

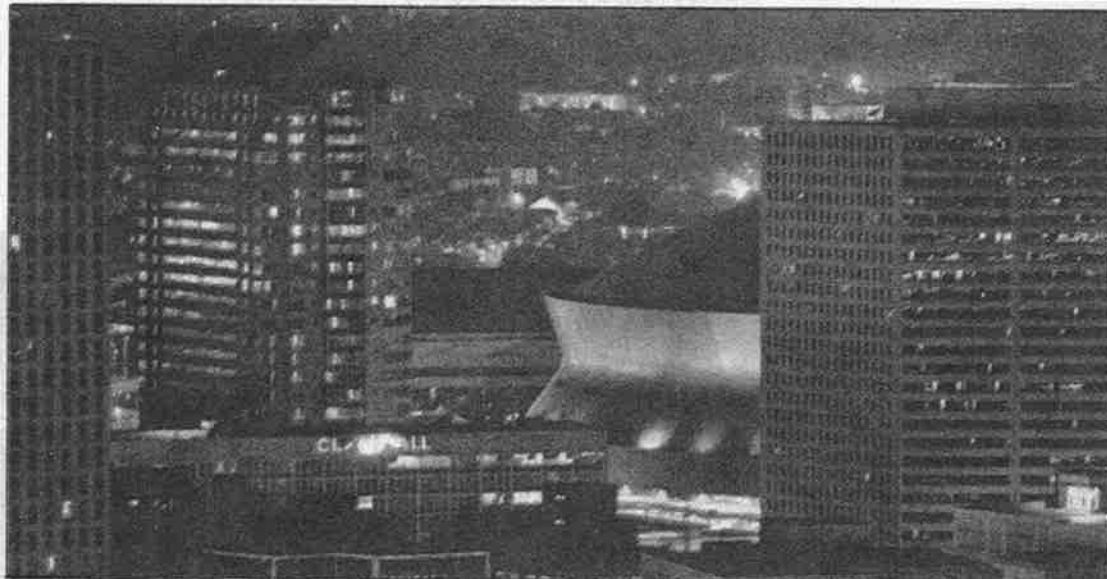
Black residents made up 60 percent of city residents last year, compared with 67 percent in 2000, the data show. Meanwhile, the proportion of white residents grew from 28 percent to 33 percent.

Jefferson Parish saw a countervailing trend. The proportion of African-American residents there grew from 23 percent in 2000 to 26 percent last year, while the makeup of white residents dropped from nearly 70 percent a decade ago to 63 percent in 2010, the data show.

St. Bernard Parish saw a steep rise in the proportion of black residents — from almost 8 percent in 2000 to nearly 18 percent last year — while its population of white residents dropped by 14 percentage points to 74 percent.

Across the metro area, the proportion of Hispanic residents, who can be black or white, grew steadily, from 2 percentage points in most places to 5.3 percentage points in Jefferson Parish.

In coming days, the data, along with information about the housing stock, will be available down to the block, offering a definitive picture of how neighborhoods and towns have changed since Katrina. Demographers and others also are likely to use the numbers to gauge social characteristics, from crime



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"Our progress has always been much bigger than a population number. Today, our recovery is in a full gallop," New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu said Thursday in a prepared statement. Landrieu played down the lower-than-expected population count, although an aide said the city would not challenge it.

rates to the prevalence of uninhabited properties.

Details about household size and the relationships among people who live under the same roof will be unveiled in coming months.

Louisiana kicks off counts

Louisiana was among the first four states in the nation to receive limited 2010 census results this week, along with Mississippi, New Jersey and Virginia. The data are rolled out based on state election schedules; because Louisiana holds statewide elections this fall, its data arrived earlier to give officials as much time as possible to redraw district lines.

The Legislature is set to convene March 20 for a special redistricting session.

Anticipating difficulty counting residents in places destroyed by Katrina and other recent hurricanes, the Census Bureau took extraordinary measures last year to ensure an accurate count, including hand-delivering questionnaires.

But some local officials, including former Mayor Ray Nagin and St. Bernard Parish President Craig Taffaro, remained leery of the process. Both encouraged residents who intended to return to the flood-ravaged communities — but had not yet done so — to say they lived there on the official census day, April 1, 2010. It's not clear how many followed the advice.

Some experts also warned that even with the special steps taken by the census, the final 2010 tallies could end up far out of line with recent annual population estimates.

Officials in Orleans, Jefferson and St. Bernard parishes managed to persuade federal officials in 2007 and 2008 to boost the initial estimates, in some cases significantly, by providing postal activity and electricity use rates tabulated by consultants.

The decennial enumeration, a person-by-person tally mandated by the Constitution, is far tougher to manipulate.

'Stop pretending'

Mark VanLandingham, a Tulane University demographer and public health professor, long predicted New Orleans' 2010

census result would fall short of recent estimates.

"We as a city really kind of need to face up to the fact that we are going to be substantially smaller than we used to be," he said. "We need to have the best count that science can give us, and we need to stop pretending that we're a bigger city than we are."

With the census tally finally in hand, New Orleanians can address the city's "most substantial problems," such as the crime rate, which are based on population, he added.

New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu on Thursday tried to play down the lower-than-expected numbers, pointing to hard evidence of the city's recovery, from the "transformation" of the city's public school landscape to the redesign of its health care and criminal justice systems.

"Our progress has always been much bigger than a population number. Today, our recovery is in a full gallop," Landrieu said in a prepared statement. "Over five years after Hurricane Katrina, our story is one of redemption and resurrection. We are not rebuilding the city we were, but creating the city we want to become, brick by brick and block by block."

A top aide to the mayor said last week that the city would not appeal the 2010 tally because the decennial challenge process "doesn't yield results."

Landrieu added Thursday that he'll rely on the accuracy of annual estimates in future years to "ensure that city government and local nonprofit organizations will have the federal funds necessary to provide our growing population with important services."

St. Bernard mulls challenge

Taffaro said he and other St. Bernard officials believe the parish's population is between 43,000 and 45,000, based on sources including utility use, the school population and active postal addresses. The 2009 estimate pegged the population at 40,665 people.

The 2010 head count puts it at 35,897.

"My initial reaction supports our need to challenge the number

MOST POPULOUS PARISHES

2010 census data

East Baton Rouge	440,171
Jefferson	432,552
Orleans	343,829
Caddo	254,969
St. Tammany	233,740

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to bring to light the fact that it's inconceivable to have lost numbers from '09 to 2010," Taffaro said.

Taffaro said the decennial census tally will mean significantly less federal money for the parish, adding that he will consult with his colleagues in neighboring parishes about a possible challenge.

"Even if you only looked at the traffic in St. Bernard, you could tell there is more than 35,000 people living here," St. Bernard Councilman Wayne Landry said.

While the census results released this week are the best measure of repopulation yet, they are still imperfect. Despite spending more than \$6 billion and hiring almost a million workers for the 2000 census, an estimated 6.4 million people nationwide were missed and another 3.1 million counted twice.

Those who were overlooked tended to be minorities, children and low-income residents who didn't participate because of privacy concerns, homelessness or low literacy levels, Allison Plyer of the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center wrote in 2001, citing data compiled the same year by the bipartisan U.S. Census Monitoring Board.

An estimated 10,300 New Orleans residents were skipped by the 2000 count, wrote Plyer, whose organization has tracked New Orleans' repopulation using postal records and helped the city prepare its challenges of annual estimates. The undercount statewide likely cost Louisiana between \$4 million and \$6 million in federal money annually during the past decade, she wrote.

"Although this is the gold standard, it's not perfectly accurate," Plyer said of the decennial census.

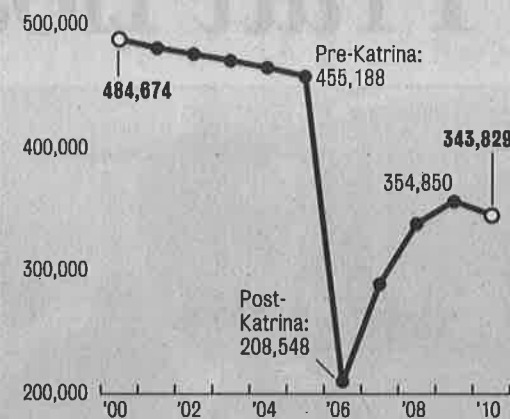
POPULATION TRACKING

A look at official census numbers by parish for the metro area from 2000 through 2010

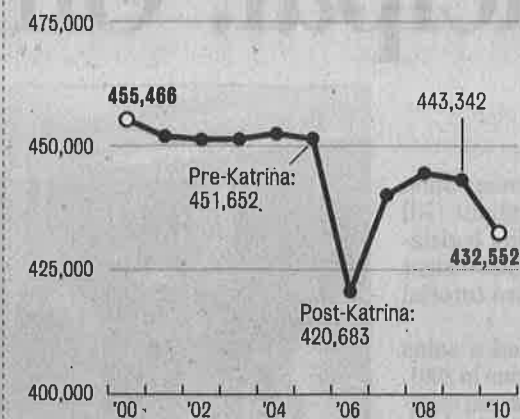
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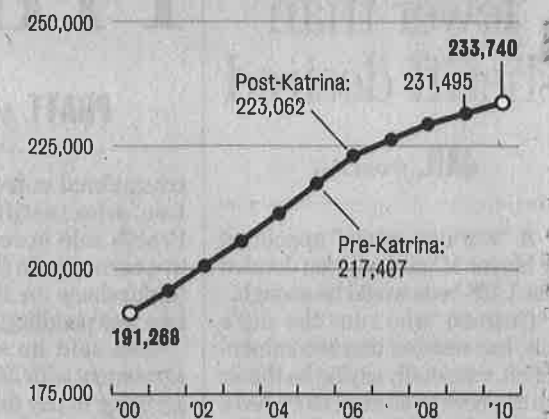
ORLEANS PARISH



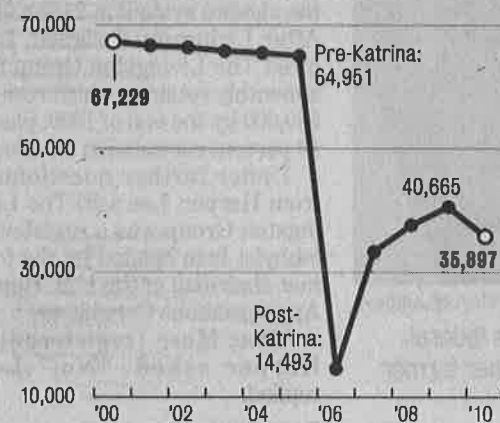
JEFFERSON PARISH



ST. TAMMANY PARISH



ST. BERNARD PARISH



ST. CHARLES PARISH



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH



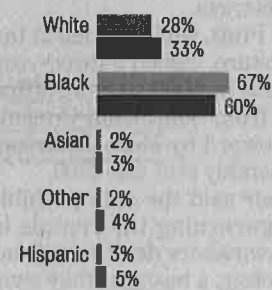
PLAQUEMINES PARISH



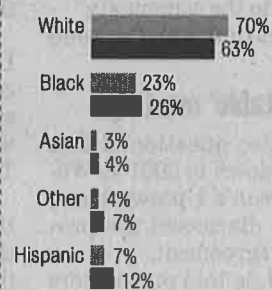
RACIAL/ETHNIC BREAKDOWN

■ 2000 ■ 2010

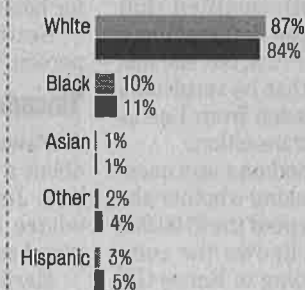
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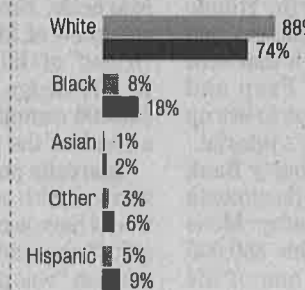
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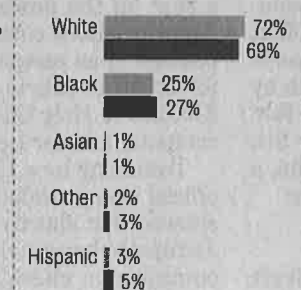
ST. TAMMANY PARISH



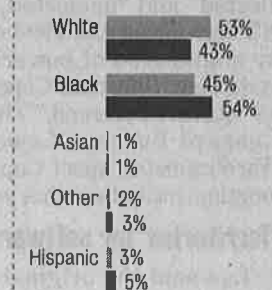
ST. BERNARD PARISH



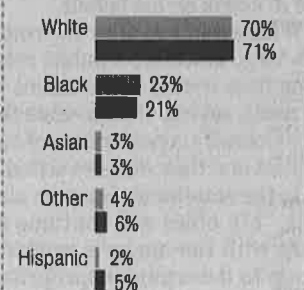
ST. CHARLES PARISH



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST



PLAQUEMINES PARISH



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Notes: Numbers do not equal 100 percent because of rounding and because Hispanic is an ethnicity, not a racial category.

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